

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Claim 1 (Original): A method of advancing a natural casing along the length of a hollow meat stuffing tube, comprising, placing a hollow natural casing on the outside surface of a hollow stuffing tube having a meat emulsion discharge end, placing a follower against an upstream end of the natural casing to slide the natural casing forwardly along the stuffing tube towards a discharge end, and placing a hollow conical shaped restrictor on the stuffing tube with a smaller diameter end adjacent the discharge end of the stuffing tube to decrease the diameter of the natural casing as it is being slidably moved towards the discharge end of the tube.

Claim 2 (Original): A machine for stuffing natural casings with emulsion, comprising, a hollow meat stuffing tube on the machine having a first end and a discharge end for extruding emulsion into a natural casing on an outer surface of the stuffing tube, a follower slidably mounted on the stuffing tube adjacent an end of the natural casing nearest the first end of the stuffing tube, and a longitudinally movable shaft that is parallel to the stuffing tube and connected to the follower and drives the follower longitudinally about the stuffing tube, thereby pushing the natural casing towards the discharge end of the stuffing tube as the casing is filled with emulsion.

Claims 3-4 (Canceled).